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## Jean-Paul Sartre the European\*

“To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, doing away with oppressor and oppressed at the same time: what remains is a dead man and a free man.”<sup>1</sup> These words are from Jean-Paul Sartre’s infamous 1961 preface to Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, written at the height of the Algerian war of decolonisation. His intervention – in equal part famous and infamous – has engendered the perception that Sartre had a particularly hostile attitude toward Europe. He has consistently been represented as either anti-European or simply not interested in Europe. Ignoring or dismissing Sartre’s Europeanism has been much the rule.

This article suggests that comments like these have obscured Sartre’s more complex ideas about Europe. This is not only the case in terms of his political interventions, but also in his theoretical work, and in the relation between the two. The Swiss Europeanist scholar and politician Denis de Rougemont set something of a pattern in this regard in his 1962 article “Sartre contre l’Europe.” Telling readers they needed to see the Fanon preface to believe it – so implausibly disparaging was it of Europe’s proud heritage – de Rougemont advised Sartre (and Fanon) to learn some history.<sup>2</sup> In a 1967 profile, François Bondy acknowledged Sartre’s early post-war Europeanism, but suggested he soon came to reject this emphatically.<sup>3</sup> Alain Finkielkraut singled out Sartre as exemplifying a French intelligentsia “that could not care less” about Europe. Supposedly, in the 1950s through the 1970s, Europe “did not at all attract the

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “The Wretched of the Earth,” in Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, trans. Azzedine Haddour, Steve Brewer, & Terry McWilliams (London & New York, 2006), 166.

<sup>2</sup> Denis de Rougemont, “Sartre contre l’Europe,” *Arts: beaux arts, littérature, spectacles*, 17 January 1962, 1 & 4, at 1.

<sup>3</sup> François Bondy, “Jean-Paul Sartre et la révolution,” *Preuves* (Dec. 1967), 57-69, at 59.

attention of intellectuals.”<sup>4</sup> In the only prior study of Sartre’s ideas of Europe, Jeanyves Guérin cites a very restricted sample of Sartre’s comments about Europe to dismiss them as “insignificant,” merely a symptom of an irresponsible, knee-jerk anti-Americanism and predilection for Stalinist totalitarianism. Guérin rests his case on the Fanon preface to conclude that we are in the presence of a “frenetic anti-Europeanism.”<sup>5</sup> In this vein Sartre has repeatedly been held up as the paradigm of irresponsible Stalinism and Third Worldism by historians such as André Reszler, Tony Judt and Mark Hewitson.<sup>6</sup> Even in the rare accounts of leftist traditions of ideas of Europe, Sartre is overlooked. Perry Anderson, for instance, reviews the ideas of Europe from Saint-Simon to Proudhon through Bakunin and Kautsky, to Trotsky and Altiero Spinelli, but finds no room for Sartre.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, Europe was a continual feature of Sartre’s output. This included critique, certainly: Europe conceived in the image of fascism, Cold War Atlanticism, European inter-state integration, colonialism, or bourgeois universalism were chief targets. But he also proffered nuanced and positive considerations of what Europe and being European meant in his time, and, importantly, what this implied in terms of future-oriented action. Beyond redressing abiding misperceptions or oversights, an examination of Sartre’s engagement with Europe has significance both for understanding his political and intellectual trajectory and, at the same time, the debates around Europe to which he contributed.

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<sup>4</sup> Alain Finkielkraut, “What is Europe?,” *New York Review of Books*, 5 Dec. 1985. Accessed online: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1985/12/05/what-is-europe/>

<sup>5</sup> Jeanyves Guérin, “Camus, Sartre et Aron devant l’unification européenne,” in Michel Perrin, ed., *L’idée de l’Europe au fil de deux millénaires* (Paris, 1994), 223-235, at 229 & passim.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Adventures on the Freedom Road: The French Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Richard Veasey (London, 1995), 41; Tony Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago & London, 1998), 96; idem., *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley, 1992), 284-285; André Rezler, *L’intellectuel contre l’Europe* (Paris, [1976] 2010); Mark Hewitson, “Inventing Europe and Reinventing the Nation-State in a New World Order,” in idem & Matthew D’Auria, eds., *Europe in Crisis: Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917-1957* (New York & Oxford, 2012), 63-81, at 72-74.

<sup>7</sup> Perry Anderson, *The New Old World* (London, 2009), 481-484.

In the first place, this article challenges the view of Sartre as an anti-European thinker. But it makes an even stronger claim – namely, that Europe was a fundamental term of reference for him. It was a significant and recurrent preoccupation which reflected and facilitated the interplay of his political commitments and philosophical positions. While rejecting certain Europes, the idea of Europe nonetheless remained a perpetual coordinate for Sartre in the articulation and re-articulation of his overarching values of socialism, freedom, and reciprocal recognition. Sartre continually returned to and reworked his ideas of Europe as a guiding framework and project to advance precisely those values.

Secondly, and more specifically, Sartre’s interventions on Europe informed and were informed by his core intellectual preoccupation of conceptualising the relation between facticity and freedom – the given and the taken, as it were. This is not only to say that Europe is a useful way for Sartre’s readers to perceive this mediation, but rather that thinking about Europe was important for Sartre himself in his conscious attempts to reconcile these two dimensions in his evolving thought. His ideas of Europe approximately parallel the development of his thought around the milestones of his *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960). He always insisted on freedom as “the definition of man” as an ontological given, but in the wake of the former work he embarked on “thickening” his account of that freedom in order to make sense of it in the concrete conditions of society.<sup>8</sup> *Being and Nothingness* posits freedom as an absolute, for which every individual has to take full responsibility for his or her self-creation. By the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* individuals are still projects of freedom, but are constrained by complex, historically bequeathed and existing social and material conditions.

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre: A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge, 2014), 234, 245, 401.

This shift from prioritising the individual to considering the totality is well-documented. Far less appreciated is the importance to this development of Sartre's thinking about Europe. My argument is that Sartre's ideas about Europe unfolded in the context of his effort to reconcile facticity and freedom and to think through the requirements of mutual recognition, reciprocal freedoms, and community, both within Europe and in Europe's relation to the non-European world. The idea of "Europe" is a useful index of continuities and divergences in his thought, as Sartre returned repeatedly to his conception of the continent in his attempt to understand what is made of people through historical conditioning and present circumstances, and what they make of themselves in transcending these. Crucially, facticity and freedom are not static in Sartre's thought, which corresponds to his ideas of Europe as something to be made, rather than an identity or destiny.

An examination of Sartre's ideas of Europe not only facilitates insights into the guiding parameters of his evolving thought, however. It also adds to our understanding of the nature of the debates around Europe to which he contributed. It is a window onto exchanges of ideas of Europe across national and ideological frontiers, the intricacy of which often expanded far beyond common teleological readings of the continent. This speaks to Frederick Cooper's argument that even more important than trying to illuminate the present is the effort to shed light on "what one does not see: the paths not taken, the dead ends of historical processes, the alternatives that appeared to people in their time."<sup>9</sup> There is perhaps a danger in this approach of overstating the openness of historical possibilities, thereby flattening the respective power of competing Europeanisms. Nonetheless, Sartre's ideas of Europe offer an excellent vantage point onto much broader political and intellectual contests in France, across the continent, and internationally. They elucidate the dynamics of those encounters in which "Europe" was both the goal and the terrain – the latter sometimes staked out by Sartre himself and sometimes by

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<sup>9</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, History, Knowledge* (Berkeley & London, 2005), 18.

others, ranging from friendly interlocutors to vociferous antagonists.

This is not only about the range of ideas of Europe, but also their nature and the intensity of their contestation. Myriad intellectuals across the continent, from Arnold Toynbee to Lucien Febvre, Alexandre Kojève, Carl Schmitt, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and Hannah Arendt, all wrestled with the question of the calibration of national, continental and global scales of politics. Moreover, Nancy Jachec points to the powerful, yet overlooked, international response to the Cold War from networks of intellectuals, notably in terms of Europeanism.<sup>10</sup> Sartre contributed novel and thought-provoking approaches to these lines of inquiry, not least in his insistence on Europe as something always to be made. In his writings on Europe, he merged inter-personal connections to the biggest structural forces of the age – Communism and fascism – with the domestic, European and international Cold War; domestic US politics; wars of decolonisation; the Cuban Revolution and the emergence of the Third World, and Italian Communism. Furthermore, Sartre's were among the most striking of interventions in terms of bringing home debates about Europe to Europeans. Speaking about Europe, then, was also to pose the question of what Europe meant to each of its inhabitants or beneficiaries – European workers, statesmen, intellectuals, and colonial settlers alike.

While Sartre's contributions to debates about Europe were idiosyncratic and controversial, they were nonetheless important in the ambition and scope that they brought to mid-century debates about the continent. Bringing together such a range of historical and contemporary experiences and processes in his ideas of Europe was of course not always successful or convincing. Nonetheless, given the scope of the enterprise, a better starting point than the Fanon preface to examine these ideas is an interview Sartre gave in the same year as its publication. Talking to *The Observer*, Sartre discussed his 1959 play, *The Condemned of*

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<sup>10</sup> Nancy Jachec, *Europe's Intellectuals and the Cold War: The Society for European Culture and Post-War Politics, Culture and International Relations* (London & New York, 2015).

*Altona*, which depicts the interactions of the von Gerlachs, a big German industrialist family living near Hamburg, including a son, Franz, who has locked himself up in his room following his return from service in the Wehrmacht. Sartre omitted mention of Nazism altogether as a motive for writing the piece, despite the Nazi context of the plot. Instead he remarked that, “for me, *Altona* is tied up with the whole evolution of Europe since 1945, as much with the Soviet concentration camps as with the war in Algeria.”<sup>11</sup>

True, the play exuded a pessimism that did not invariably characterise Sartre’s representations of the continent; but it is useful in highlighting various themes which recur in Sartre’s understanding of Europe: violence, as well as its manifestation and complication across generations; memory and forgetting; justice and judgement. For Debarati Sanyal, the play is an apt illustration of the concept of “knotted memory” in its portrayal of different experiences of recent historical violence which were not reducible to each other, but certainly intertwined in various ways.<sup>12</sup> By extension, one might suggest that Sartre’s work represents a knotted Europe. The advantage of this concept is that it foregrounds the manifold elements that constitute meanings of Europe, and yet does so in such a way as to suggest a certain necessary unpredictability or obscurity. The metaphor of a knot connotes elements of ideas about the continent that are almost inextricably intertwined, and whilst distinguishable, connect to each other in ways that are decidedly difficult to separate. Importantly, Sartre denied that each of these manifestations of Europe or Europeaness were equivalent and interchangeable.<sup>13</sup> As we will see, the play and its depiction of Europe is also symptomatic of a key qualitative shift in Sartre’s thinking in which greater weight was accorded to the grey ambiguity of human

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<sup>11</sup> “Sartre Talks to Tynan,” *The Observer*, 18 June 1961, 21, at 21. Contat and Rybalka note that the interview appeared shortly after in French in *Afrique Action*, and in German in *Die Zeit*. See Michel Contat & Michel Rybalka, eds., *Les écrits de Sartre. Chronologie, bibliographie commentée* (Paris, 1970), 366.

<sup>12</sup> See Debarati Sanyal, “Crabwalk History: Torture, Allegory, and Memory in Sartre,” *Yale French Studies*, 118-119 (2010), 52-71.

<sup>13</sup> See “*Les Séquestrés d’Altona*. Jean-Paul Sartre: ‘Il ne s’agit ni d’une pièce politique... ni d’une pièce à thèse’, interview par Claude Sarraute,” *Le Monde*, 17 September 1959; “Jean-Paul Sartre: ‘Frantz non plus n’était pas nazi,’ interview par Jacqueline Autrusseau,” *Les Lettres françaises*, 17-23 Sept. 1959.

experience without foregoing his insistence on responsibility.

Europe understood in this way also added an important claim for universalism to contemporary debates. Sartre's understanding of Europe dovetailed with debates about universalism, as he challenged what he saw as a bourgeois conception of Europe as embodying the universal. Which is to say a kind of self-congratulatory Eurocentrism that he saw in many of his peers. Universalism remained integral to Sartre's vision, but he stressed the question of how a provincialised Europe could contribute to this common project of humanity in terms of reciprocal freedom, however painfully out of reach that goal remained.

## Europe and Fascism and War

*The Condemned of Altona* was far from the first time Sartre invoked Europe with reference to fascism. It is striking that his first regular invocations of Europe related to the experience of the war or fascism, since this was a formative experience for Sartre, personally, intellectually and politically. In his account, the experience of the Second World War rid him of his individualism and revealed to him the value of the social: "That was the real turning-point of my life."<sup>14</sup> However much this is overstated – the impact of the war on him is probably better conceptualised as the culmination of a cumulative politicisation from the 1930s onwards – the question remains of how this new-found, life-changing concern for the social manifested itself in Sartre's ideas about Europe.

In fact, if references to "Europe" are peppered throughout his *War Diaries* – penned while called-up for military service between 1939-1940 – they also suggest that it was not a developed concept in his thought. It was, nevertheless, an idea of which he was increasingly

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<sup>14</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *War Diaries. Notebooks from a Phoney War. November 1939 – March 1940*, trans. Quentin Hoare (London & New York, 1999), ix.



aware and concerned for as a discernible entity, as indicated by several entries referring to European political projects and their ramifications for war or peace.<sup>15</sup> After his release from German captivity and return to Paris in 1941, Sartre developed a more active interest in Europe. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka shed light on Sartre's work in 1941 for the ephemeral resistance group and eponymous journal *Socialisme et liberté* [*Socialism and Freedom*]. During the time of his involvement with this organisation Sartre penned his ideas concerning the future of the continent after the war, even going so far as to draft a constitution for Europe.<sup>16</sup> Not for the last time Sartre put forth a vision of Europe against the stark nationalism typical of the French Communists, both in the Resistance and in the post-war party.

Contat and Rybalka point to another significant source from this period, citing the following quote attributed to Sartre in Henri Michel's 1962 work, *Les Courants de pensée de la Résistance* [*Currents of Thought in the Resistance*]: "It's often said that the future Europe needs France. I beg to differ. Four years of occupation have bequeathed us a sort of idleness and fatalism."<sup>17</sup> The diagnosis of France's failings in the document – "La Résistance: La France et le monde de demain, par un philosophe" ["The Resistance, France and the world tomorrow, by a philosopher"] – implied that in its current state France had little to contribute to France. But, by the same token, if the dreary effects of occupation on French society were to be redressed, it followed that France had a significant contribution to make to the continent. .

Given the reference to four years of occupation, the document ostensibly dates from 1944. However, Contat and Rybalka explain that the document is something of a puzzle. Sartre reacted with a mix of perplexity and stupefaction when they presented it to him in preparing their huge 1970 annotated bibliography of his work. Whilst in large part recognising his ideas

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 33, 52-53, 60, 97-98, 328-9.

<sup>16</sup> Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 82. Unfortunately, there is no indication that the document still exists.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 110.

and style in it, he had no memory of having written it. Nor did the pessimism of its tone seem consonant with his thought by 1944. In Contat and Rybalka's assessment, the document is indeed Sartre's or was directly inspired by him. But it was probably written long before, perhaps in the 1941 period of *Socialisme et Liberté*, and its date modified by someone who undertook that it ended up in Algiers.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the ambivalence of the document would render it less interesting but for what Contat and Rybalka identify as its potential significance to the development of Sartre's political and philosophical thought. It was the first detailed formulation of an idea that Sartre was never to abandon – the necessary alliance of socialism and liberty.<sup>19</sup> Crucially, then, Europe was not an end, for Sartre; rather, it was of interest to the extent that it furthered human emancipation on those terms of socialism and liberty. Furthermore, this horizon of socialism and liberty that Sartre kept in mind in thinking henceforth about Europe was, for him, a mutual implication. Yet, just like Sartre's ideas of the Europe to be derived from them, these values were not at all static conceptualisations.

It is also the case in this period that Sartre referred to Europe not simply in relation to the war or Germany, but specifically to fascism and Nazism. This is particularly significant given Sarah Shurts' argument that it is precisely in the interwar period and in the years of collaboration that the transition within the French far right from an emphasis on exclusive nationalism to Europeanism should be situated.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, she rejects the notion that the Europeanism of far-right intellectuals like Abel Bonnard, Alphonse de Châteaubriant, or Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, was an incidental idiosyncrasy. Rather, it was a central and influential aspect of their ideology and thereby benefitted from the significant reach, prestige and influence of

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Shurts, "Continental Collaboration. The Transition from Ultranationalism to Pan-Europeanism by the Interwar French Fascist Right," *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 32/3 (2014), 79-96, at 79-80.

their cultural networks.<sup>21</sup> This version of Europe was, however, a much truncated, Western one, excluding Slavic lands in accordance with the far right's racism.

Sartre mentioned Châteaubriant's joyous appreciation of Hitler's speeches in Bonnard's journal, *La Gerbe* [*The Sheaf*].<sup>22</sup> This was, in fact, a self-identified "European" journal.<sup>23</sup> But it was Drieu on whom Sartre concentrated his fire in his April 1943 piece for an underground edition of *Les Lettres françaises* [*French Letters*].<sup>24</sup> His indictment referred to Drieu's Europeanism, pointing to his attendance at a writers' conference in Weimar in October 1941 where he and his co-fascists were to toast Goethe and try to establish a "European" literature.<sup>25</sup> Sartre's quote marks surrounding "European" challenged the naturalisation of the concept to insist that Europe could be interpreted variously, and that the likes of Drieu were a reminder of the stakes involved in successfully appropriating the term. This contradicts Shurts' inference that Camus, but not Sartre, attempted to re-appropriate the concept of "Europe" from the far right.<sup>26</sup>

Sartre's indictment of fascism, including its Europeanist aspect, was not restricted to Parisian intellectuals. In his 1945 piece, "Paris under the occupation," Sartre stressed the difficulty of conveying to countries that had remained free what it was to be occupied in a German "Europe" (again, note Sartre's use of quote marks here) of camps, torture and the usurpation of control of one's destiny: "there was still Europe, but Europe was a word that instilled horror, it meant servitude."<sup>27</sup> In this instance, Europe was a negative conceptualisation, held together by a sense of external pressure or danger – circumstances that would later be central to Sartre's rethinking of the nature of groups and collectivities.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>22</sup> Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 650.

<sup>23</sup> Shurts, "Continental Collaboration," 87.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Drieu La Rochelle, ou la haine de soi," in Sartre, *Situations III* (Paris, 1949), 152-154.

<sup>25</sup> Shurts, "Continental Collaboration," 92.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 80, 83.

<sup>27</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Paris sous l'occupation," in Sartre, *Situations III*, 15-42, at 28, 26.

Sartre reiterated this sentiment of Europe and unfreedom succinctly in *What is Literature?*: “the word ‘Europe’ formerly referred to the geographical, economic, and political unity of the Old Continent. Today, it preserves a musty smell of Germanism and servitude.”<sup>28</sup> Again, the idea of Europe was of such central concern for Sartre because it presented itself foremost as a signifier of collective freedom or, conversely, the lack thereof. It is, then, essential to bear in mind that Sartre’s first substantial engagement with the idea of Europe was in relation to the Nazi or fascist one. The annulment of freedom that this fascist Europe entailed coloured all subsequent engagement with the European idea, in accordance with his primary intellectual preoccupation with freedom and its conditions and curtailments. Subjugation was never a closed situation for Sartre, however. Famously, he declared in his 1944 “The Republic of Silence” that “we were never more free than during the German occupation.”<sup>29</sup> That twinning of freedom and commitment would prove to be a persistent trait in Sartre’s Europeanism, and informed his view of Europe as an ongoing project.

In the immediate aftermath of the war Sartre’s public profile rocketed, notably with his famous 1945 public lecture “Existentialism is a Humanism”. As Thomas R. Flynn notes, Sartre’s philosophy here was still markedly voluntarist.<sup>30</sup> But he was clearly starting to think through the implications of situation and facticity. Tellingly, he did so by transposing his experience of solidarity experienced in captivity and the heroism of the Resistance as a model for the entire population.<sup>31</sup> Channelling his formative war years, he presented the figure of “the European of 1945”. Alluding to the meteoric rise of Sartre’s stock and influence, his biographer Annie Cohen-Solal noted that “the magical European of 1945 was going to become very popular.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Idem., *What is Literature?*, 218.

<sup>29</sup> Idem., “La république du silence”, in Sartre, *Situations III* (Paris, 1949), 11-14, at 11.

<sup>30</sup> Flynn, *Sartre*, 232.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 251.

Nor was this reckoning with the meaning of the experience of the war a fleeting emotional reaction. In his 1949 article, “La défense de la culture française par la culture européenne” [“Defence of French Culture through European Culture”], Sartre returned to the counter-intuitive idea that freedom presented itself through the German occupation and the corollary conception of Europe that the occupation engendered. Europe was both possible and necessary precisely because of the Nazi occupation of the continent. Its destructiveness, both in human and material damage, bequeathed “a human architecture common to Europe.”<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the commonality of lived human experience that might be the basis of precipitating a European culture was manifested in the fact that “most Europeans have been in the preceding years – and still are in many cases – led to live a morality of extreme situations, a morality in which one asks oneself how man will behave in the face of torture, famine, or death, all the situations which thirty years ago seemed the abstract problem posed to his students by a philosophy teacher who had never experienced it.”<sup>34</sup>

In Sartre’s exposition of the idea of Europe in the context of war and fascism, then, two enduring central parameters were set out. First, the concept of Europe’s necessary entanglement with violence and its implications for freedom; and secondly, the concept of being situated, committed, responsible, and, concomitantly, the conception of Europe as a project. Both parameters were expressed forcefully in this call for European unity on the basis that the recent conflict had reduced national specificities between European countries, imparting a tragic commonality of urban wreckage:

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<sup>33</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Défense de la culture française par la culture européenne,” *Politique étrangère*, 3 (1949), 233-248, at 245. An abridged English version of Sartre’s piece was published in *Commentary* in May 1950. However, an editor’s note stipulated that the translation was in fact a condensed version of a speech given before the French League Against Anti-Semitism. See Jean-Paul Sartre, “A European Declaration of Independence,” *Commentary* (May 1950), 407-414, at 407. This is informative, since Sartre invoked the war and occupation a great deal in relation to his idea of Europe, but not often with specific reference to Nazi persecution of Jews, even though that issue of course was intrinsically linked to the fascist idea of Europe that he attacked. He took great interest in Jews as a persecuted people, but this is an unusual instance of linking their persecution directly to the European idea.

<sup>34</sup> Idem., “Défense de la culture française,” 246.

Everywhere the same catastrophe has just been lived through, leaving the same landscape. Rotterdam was profoundly different to Florence, but currently, whether one takes a walk in the Uffizi quarter or in Rotterdam, or in Le Havre, one is always in this same landscape which was born as a common human architecture in Europe. And even if one lives in cities that were spared, the presence of those destroyed cities weighs on and changes the landscape. We know what a mutilated city is and that this mutilated city is European.<sup>35</sup>

Sartre was perhaps surprisingly conventional here. His comments echo, for instance, the conservative novelist, Roger Nimier, who drearily suggested in 1945 that the twentieth century's only Europeans were corpses on rubble. Or, Jacques Soustelle, later a governor general of French Algeria, who insisted in 1951 that a distinctive psychology could be discerned in Europeans because of their specific experience of war, including watching their cities go up in flames.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, for Sartre, just as the war had fashioned a common European urban landscape, it had catalysed a common European culture. Previously Europeans might have had an interest in each other's cultures but would struggle to really enter into each other's ideas. Not so after the war, when Swedes, Greeks or the Dutch might not speak the same '*langue*' but, it was immediately clear, spoke the same '*langage*'.<sup>37</sup> In fact, "in all areas – political, social, economic, even metaphysical – European man is in the same situation today. Circumstances, the past and immediate future pose the same problems to this man."<sup>38</sup> This situatedness as Europeans would now take on new dimensions with the onset of the Cold War and in post-war international relations.

## Europe and Post-War International Relations

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>36</sup> Roger Nimier, "Vingt ans en 1945," *La Table ronde*, 20-21 (Aug.-Sept 1945) cited in Raoul Girardet, "L'héritage de l'Action française," *Revue française de science politique*, 4 (1957), 765-792, at 792; Jacques Soustelle, "France and Europe: a Gaullist View," *Foreign Affairs*, 30:1/4 (1951/1952), 545-553, at 545.

<sup>37</sup> Sartre, "Défense de la culture française," 246.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

One can trace Sartre's engagement with the concept of Europe back to his earliest writings. His 1927 piece "Theory of the State in French Thought Today" reviewed various recent French works on international affairs, including a 1922 book by legal scholar Léon Duguit, *Souveraineté et liberté* [*Sovereignty and Liberty*], which proposed a Europeanist approach to French government policy.<sup>39</sup> The impact of international relations on Sartre's awareness, imagination and articulation of Europe – at least, in a broader sense than fascist internationalism – would only develop in the post-war period, however.

The concept of Europe became a key tool and stake in the Cold War, and Sartre's own articulations of it need to be situated in key turning points in that conflict, both domestically and internationally, and in dialogue with various interlocutors and adversaries. This section contextualises the development of his thought and interventions in the name of Europe in this period of heightened French public attention to continental integration and the exigencies of the new Cold War world. Sartre's ideas of Europe in this context illuminate important specificities of the intellectual Cold War, both in terms of how its rigid divisions were structured, and how they were not, for all that, impermeable. On the contrary, ideas of Europe were a basis for political and intellectual exchange to which Sartre contributed.

The resonance of the escalation of the Cold War was all the stronger in France given the strength of its Communist party (PCF). This was also the period for which Sartre has been most criticised, as he closely aligned himself with the PCF between 1952 and 1956. His service to the party went as far as to claim upon returning from a visit to the USSR in 1954 that there existed total freedom of criticism there.<sup>40</sup> But Cold War polarization was not always so rigid,

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<sup>39</sup> Idem., "The Theory of the State in Modern French Thought," in Michel Contat & Michel Rybalka, eds., *Selected Prose: The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston, 1974), 22-36, at 35.

<sup>40</sup> "Les impressions de Jean-Paul Sartre sur son voyage en U.R.S.S.," *Libération*, 15 July 1954.

as manifested in interventions of political radicals, including Sartre, on the subject of Europe, reflecting hopes for non-alignment, and for forging paths between Moscow and Washington, and between social democracy and Stalinism.

While international relations in the post-war period naturally meant that Sartre conceived Europe in contrast to the USA, he did not set out from a position of hostility to the latter, contrary to a certain reputation of unwavering anti-Americanism. His reflections and comparison of the USA and Europe after his 1945 visit to the former were measured and thoughtful. These involved something of a cultural conception of Europe in terms of distinctive lifestyles or mentalities. His observations centred especially on architecture and urbanism, and on cultural attitudes and outlooks. On that basis, Sartre also developed a conception of European culture as something that required not simply defending but cultivating. His imbibing of American culture during his visit brought home to Sartre the contingency and locality of European culture and European forms of modernity. Furthermore, he was instinctively enthused by his sense of future-orientation of American culture, in contrast to a certain bad faith on the part of Europeans overly encumbered by, and fatalistic in the face of, their past.<sup>41</sup>

Thinking about Europe in terms of bad faith – the flight into alibis to deny one's freedom – was a trope that Sartre reiterated in his 1947 interventions that were subsequently published as *What is Literature?* This can be understood as a step in his substantiation of the concept of freedom in view of concrete conditions. It was also an instance of his emphasis on the particular importance of situation for the intellectual. In this view, the writer is necessarily situated in his time and place. No longer could flight from the here and now be mistaken for anything else than bad faith.<sup>42</sup> Situatedness necessitated taking cognisance

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<sup>41</sup> See, for example, idem., “Villes d’Amérique,” in Sartre, *Situations III*, 93-112, at 93-94, 99, 101, 107; Idem., “New-York, ville coloniale,” in Sartre, *Situations III*, passim.

<sup>42</sup> Sartre, *What is Literature?*, 51.



of world events. But rather than France, Europe was the lens through which the world came into sharpest focus, as opposed to the short-sightedness of the nation and the long-sightedness of an overly abstract universalism. Universalism was paramount but had to be approached with a sense of one's provincialism if freedom were to be grasped concretely. To this end, his commentaries on Europe in the work involved four propositions: first, a conception of Europe was unavoidable in this age of catastrophe; second, one could not but take a position in that Europe in which one was situated; three, that the idea of Europe was tainted by its association with German militarism or Nazism; and four, that a Europe worth anything at all, and the Europe to be made, would be socialist in character. Sartre again stressed that discourse about Europe took on its significance through active engagement in the present: "As for socialist Europe, there's no 'choosing' it since it doesn't exist. It is *to be made*."<sup>43</sup> This view was corroborated in his December 1948 address to a meeting for "l'Internationalisme de l'esprit" at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, where Sartre rejected André Malraux's notion of Europe as a destiny: "we writers gathered here this evening don't believe in destiny. We don't believe that Europe is a destiny. We also think that it can be an undertaking, a common undertaking of all Europeans."<sup>44</sup> Sartre, then, thought in terms of Europe as an impetus to emancipation, but that this was undercut if it ossified into a conception of group identity.

According to Simone de Beauvoir, *What is Literature?* was a bridge between the theoretical and practical for Sartre, leading him to the *Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire* [Revolutionary Democratic Rally] (RDR).<sup>45</sup> This was a short-lived but significant movement in 1948-1949 in which Sartre contributed to the organisation's goal of a socialist Europe, autonomous from the superpowers and as a force for peace. As he expressed

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 227. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>44</sup> Idem., "Il faut que nous menions cette lutte en commun," *La Gauche*, 20 December 1948, cited in Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 204.

<sup>45</sup> Cited in Ian H. Birchall, "Neither Washington nor Moscow? The rise and fall of the Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire," *Journal of European Studies*, 29 (1999), 365-404, at 397.

it in *Franc-Tireur* [*Irregular Soldier*] in December 1948: “Refusing to choose between the USSR and America is not to cede to one or the other or to let ourselves be tossed about between them. It’s to make a *positive* choice – that of Europe, socialism, and of ourselves.”<sup>46</sup>

A crucial and foremost point for Sartre was that, for the RDR, securing peace on the continent connected to the broader aim of transcending Europe’s current state as an object, to retrieve a capacity to fashion itself, determine itself as a subject; to act rather than simply be acted upon. Peace and socialism, in this view, implied each other, and were the guiding ethos of the Europe to be made. In fact, the choice was potentially stark – either this kind of positive Europe, or Europe as merely the signifier of an area destroyed in atomic war.

Despite impressive attendances at conferences and public meetings, the RDR was soon defunct. Part of the explanation lay in the hostility of other parties, notably the French Socialists (SFIO) and PCF, and the lack of media clout behind the initiative. Perhaps most importantly, though, was the inherent incompatibility between those committed to a neutral Europe and an alternative drift towards Atlanticism as the Cold War was ramped up. Yet, the RDR’s demise by 1949 was not the end of Sartre’s engagement with international affairs and the idea of Europe, although it was never again considered in such a programmatic form.

Various RDR veterans who leaned towards the Atlanticist camp soon migrated into the circles of the journal *Preuves* [*Proofs*]. This is significant since the concept of “Europe” became a key rhetorical tool and stake in Cold War France. There was evidence of this in the famous Sartre-Camus exchange, in which the latter condemned the “European pride” that underlay the historicist appeal of the Soviet Union for European intellectuals. But Europeanist discourse was conjoined to opposition to Sartre in a more sustained and clear manner in the circles of *Preuves*. This monthly cultural-political journal was the organ of the anti-communist

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<sup>46</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Il nous faut la paix pour refaire le monde. Réponse à ceux qui nous appellent ‘Munichois’,” *Franc-Tireur*, 10 Dec. 1948, reprinted in Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 690-693, at 693.

advocacy group, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF).<sup>47</sup> *Preuves* was launched with the intention of rivalling Sartre's *Les Temps modernes* [*Modern Times*] and to encourage defections from Sartre's milieu. Frances Stonor Sanders cites two sources who claim that the organisation in fact considered Sartre and de Beauvoir, and those over whom they had influence, as its first and foremost target.<sup>48</sup> This guiding ethos of antipathy towards Sartre was articulated with an exclusive claim to Europe and Europeanism for antitotalitarianism. The tenacity of this exclusivism could only draw from the prevailing axiom that the democratic essence of Europe radically distinguished it from Soviet totalitarianism.<sup>49</sup>

Divisions over the desirability of an Atlanticist Europe had already deepened with the outbreak of the Korean War. Sartre's attitude towards the USA clearly hardened, as manifested in his December 1950 piece in *The Nation*, "The Chances of Peace," which marked a distinct turning point from his stance in the RDR.<sup>50</sup> Sartre again set Europeans up as the narrating subject, and spoke on behalf of Europeans. It is on that basis that Sartre called for Americans to cease looking at Europeans as potential soldiers: "we would be more useful in the cause of peace than – belligerent without means – we are to the cause of your war."<sup>51</sup> The notion of a Europe whose nature was distorted by the superpowers was arguably replayed in his January 1952 piece, "Il n'y a plus de doctrine antisémite" ["There is no longer an Antisemitic Doctrine"]. Sartre argued that the old French right was all but dead, and that the existence of

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<sup>47</sup> Pierre Grémion, "Introduction," in Grémion, ed., *Preuves: une revue européenne à Paris* (Paris, 1989), 11 & passim.

<sup>48</sup> Frances Stonor Sanders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London, 1999), 101. For examples of articles specifically targeting Sartre, see especially Jacques Carat, "La deuxième 'enfance d'un chef'," *Preuves* (Aug.-Sept. 1952), 94-97; and François Bondy, "Jean-Paul Sartre et la révolution," *Preuves* (Dec. 1967), 57-69.

<sup>49</sup> See Kevin Duong, "Does Democracy End in Terror? Transformations of Antitotalitarianism in Postwar France," *Modern Intellectual History*, 14/2 (2017), 537-563.

<sup>50</sup> Extracts reprinted in Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 228.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

anti-Semitism and fascism today reflected the international tension between the two blocs. But for superpower belligerence, it would seem, Europe would be substantially more attractive.<sup>52</sup>

Sartre's appetite for political organising was soured by the experience of the RDR and he was politically disoriented in the aftermath of its collapse.<sup>53</sup> For the moment he had no stomach for another attempt to organise the independent left, and retreated back to his literary and philosophical preoccupations and wrote little of direct political significance for the next two years. Countenancing no alternative progressive force besides the PCF, Sartre aligned himself with the Party, as elaborated in the series of articles, *Les Communistes et la paix* [*Communists and the Peace*], published in *Les Temps modernes* in the wake of the violent crackdown on the demonstration against the visit to Paris of American General Matthew Ridgway in 1952. Sartre's politics were characterised in this period by a presumption of the progressive nature and peaceful goals of the Soviet Union, and of the identity between party and class in the PCF.<sup>54</sup>

Yet, his political interventions in this period cannot be reduced to calculated and rigid dogmatism. Sartre wrote in varying contexts about political passion, and this emotion generated by Cold War polarization impacted him no less than his contemporaries.<sup>55</sup> The reaction to the crackdown on the Ridgway protests was a key instance, as was the fallout from the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in June 1953. For Sartre, the latter signalled a clear divergence between America and Europe. He went as far as to claim that the criminal madness underpinning the execution of the Rosenbergs had a tremendous effect in uniting Europe:

Yesterday Europe as a whole, in a single movement, with its masses, priests, ministers and heads of state asked your president to make the most human, most simple gesture.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>53</sup> Birchall, *Sartre against Stalinism*, 123.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> On "passion" in politics see Sartre, "The Theory of the State in Modern French Thought,"; idem., *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker (New York, 1995).

We were demanding neither your dollars, nor your armies, nor your soldiers, but two lives, two innocent lives.

Have you only understood the extent of this extraordinary truce? Class conflicts, old grudges, everything was put to one side; the Rosenbergs have achieved the unity of Europe.<sup>56</sup>

Sartre's assessment of the consequences to America's reputation, but also his prescription, was that there would be a renewed impetus for Europe to establish itself independently of the United States. America offered little to Europe besides militarisation and the prospect of serving as a battlefield. Hence he advised Americans: "don't be surprised if we cry from one end of Europe to the other: Watch out! America is rabid. Let's cut the links which attach us to it, otherwise in turn we'll be crazy and rabid."<sup>57</sup>

To return momentarily to the RDR, in many ways this prefigured the move for European integration in the 1950s. This is an aspect of the idea of Europe that Sartre touched on, albeit in no great depth.<sup>58</sup> But it is curious that, in his 1964 obituary of Palmiro Togliatti, Sartre praised the Italian Communist leader's enthusiasm for the development of the European Common Market. This is probably best explained by a genuine personal fondness for Togliatti on the part of Sartre, and a desire to use the Italian Communist Party (PCI) as a means of criticising their French counterpart, the PCF – with whom relations had deteriorated by this point – whose position on the Common Market tended to be crudely nationalist and anti-German.<sup>59</sup> This will be discussed further below regarding Sartre's Europeanism in relation to the Third World. Furthermore, the Europeanism of the French Socialist Party (SFIO) did

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<sup>56</sup> Idem., "Les animaux malades de la rage," *Libération*, 22 June 1953, reprinted in Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 704-708, at 705.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 708.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Simone de Beauvoir's extended critical examination of the bourgeois idea of Europe and its relation to contemporary European integration such as the European Defence Community in "La pensée de droite, aujourd'hui," *Les Temps modernes* (June-July 1955), 1539-1575.

<sup>59</sup> On Sartre's admiration and affection for Togliatti, see John Gerassi, *Talking with Sartre. Conversations and Debates* (New Haven & London, 2009), 198-200.

nothing to recommend it to Sartre, who saw the party as embodying a kind of naïve bourgeois humanism further discredited by its superintendence of torture in Algeria. This was a parochial, homogenising universalism which had no regard for any particularity other than in its misrecognition of its own. It had much in common with Denis de Rougemont's conception of Europe as quintessentially universalising.<sup>60</sup>

Sartre was not unusual as an intellectual who declined to delve into the technical institutional aspects of Europeanism – Albert Camus, however much they otherwise clashed, did likewise.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, mainstream European inter-state integration was a terrain dominated by De Gaulle from his ascension in 1958. As Maud Bracke puts it, “De Gaulle’s vision of European integration and of ‘Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals’ defined the terms of the debate on Europe in France in the 1960s.” And the General did so in a way that complicated the battle lines of the issue, since his conservative political profile was combined with a move away from Atlanticism.<sup>62</sup> For Sartre, De Gaulle was the epitome of the pernicious delegation of authority, the arrogation of power in the name of a super-humanity whose necessary correlate was a sub-humanity and the bad faith of those who divested their freedom to entrust France’s future in him.

European integration via French-German intergovernmental rapprochement featured in the knotted Europe suggested in the 1959 play *The Condemned of Altona* (instructively, entitled *Loser Wins* in the original English translation). As we have seen, the work aimed to bring together without conflating Nazism and the whole history of Europe since 1945. This objective corresponded to Sartre’s reworking of his thought in response to the challenge of Maurice

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<sup>60</sup> See Denis de Rougemont, *Vingt-huit siècles d’Europe. La conscience européenne à travers les textes d’Hésiode à nos jours* (Paris, 1961).

<sup>61</sup> See John Oswald, “Constructions of Europe in the Fictional and Political Works of Albert Camus” (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Stirling, 2001), 139.

<sup>62</sup> Maud Bracke, “From the Atlantic to the Urals? Italian and French communism and the question of Europe, 1956-1973,” *Journal of European Integration History* (2007), 33-54, at 38-39, 42.

Merleau-Ponty in his vociferous 1955 critique of Sartre's fellow travelling.<sup>63</sup> He charged that there was an unbridgeable gulf in Sartre's philosophy between the "in-itself" and the "for-itself". This was to say that Sartre's conception of consciousness as freedom presupposed an "accursed lucidity". Implausibly, no room was left for ambiguity, uncertainty, opacity, or inertia, all of which are fundamental to the way people experience the world. Sartre's developing conceptions of Europe, then, did not simply compound or add more detail in this thickening of his account of facticity. Rather, there was a qualitative shift here, which took account of how complicated making sense of the idea of Europe was, given the multiplicity of its violent but complex, and obscurely intertwined, historical baggage. Crucially, though, in reformulating his thought to allow for this obscurity and ambiguity, Sartre made no concessions in his insistence on responsibility. This tension between complex facticity and responsibility would arise again in relation to Europe, as we will see below, in reactions by Denis de Rougemont and Jean-Marie Domenach to Sartre's Fanon preface.

The only other instances where Sartre referred to mainstream intergovernmental processes of European integration seem to have been negative. On 27 January 1954 he contributed to a conference with a protest against the Bonn and Paris treaties and the European Defence Community, and addressed a meeting called in opposition to the latter.<sup>64</sup> He had inveighed against the threat of a new *Reichswehr* in the pages of *Le Monde* in January 1953.<sup>65</sup> However, an interview with Sartre was published in the January-February 1954 edition of the Mexican journal *Cuadernos Americanos* [*American Notebooks*]. He stated his objection to the "Marshallisation" of Europe and advocated an independent European economic policy as a

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<sup>63</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Sartre and Ultra-Bolshevism," in *Adventures of the Dialectic*, trans. Joseph Bien (Evanston, Ill., 1973).

<sup>64</sup> Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 34.

<sup>65</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Le Congrès de Vienne," *Le Monde*, 1 Jan. 1953, reprinted in *ibid.*, 256-259, at 256.

means of securing peace.<sup>66</sup> This indicates that even in the period between 1952 and 1956 in which Sartre most aligned his politics with the PCF, and in which he was still marked by the disappointment of the RDR, he could still envisage a political project for Europe and eschew the PCF's narrow nationalism.<sup>67</sup>

Yet, political and intellectual Cold War lines were not invariably rigid. This was demonstrated precisely in exchanges between meetings of intellectuals on a European basis, and in their mutual exchange of views, tacit or explicit, on the meaning of Europe and Europeanness, and of the role and nature of the European intellectual. A foremost example was the *Société européenne de la culture* [European Society of Culture] (SEC), which, according to Nancy Jachec, "was unique in its openness to communist participation, and its expanded vision of Europe and of Europe's global responsibilities in the post-war period."<sup>68</sup>

In the SEC's Dialogue Est-Ouest [East-West Dialogue] in Venice in March 1956 the "European problem" figured centrally. Sartre contributed through logistical organising, securing the participation of Soviet writers, and in his own intellectual input in debates about the nature of Europe and Europeanism with reference to Europe's relation to universalism or universal culture, notably in dialogue with Ignazio Silone and Merleau-Ponty.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the SEC's secretary-general, Umberto Campagnolo acknowledged his debt to Sartre in the development of his own thought, however much their political affiliations and, indeed, conceptualisations of Europe differed in terms of attitudes to Communism and Europe as a

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<sup>66</sup> "Una entrevista con Jean-Paul Sartre, por Marcel Saporta," *Cuadernos Americanos* (Jan.-Feb. 1954), 57-64, at 58.

<sup>67</sup> The compatibility of Sartre's fellow-travelling with a certain Europeanism was also indicated by the special issue of *Les Temps modernes* in 1955 devoted to an examination of the Left. The (unsigned) editorial focussed on the PCF's aim of reviving the Popular Front including the SFIO, arguing that only this could help to establish a neutral zone in Europe allowing the coexistence of the two blocs. "Vers un front populaire?," *Les Temps modernes* (May 1955), 2005-2015, at 2015.

<sup>68</sup> Nancy Jachec, "The *Société Européenne de Culture*'s Dialogue Est-Ouest 1956: Confronting the 'European Problem'," *History of European Ideas*, 34 (2008), 558-569, at 559.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 561, 563 & passim.



universal model.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, Sartre's piece "Existentialism and Marxism" was solicited through SEC connections and networks for the Polish journal *Twórczość* [*Creativity*] as part of a post-Budapest issue on "European problems", and was, in turn, fundamental to the thought of reformist intellectuals in Eastern Europe.<sup>71</sup> In turn, Sartre's own intellectual development was, at least in small part, impacted by this Europeanist organisation. His exchange with the Yugoslav writer and artist Marko Ristić was regarded as having added to his doubts about actually existing socialism, and so dovetailed with his reworking of Marxism in these years. Subsequent positions by Sartre, both written and organisational, suggest a continued commitment to fostering the development of a European culture, alongside his belief in the possibility of universal culture.<sup>72</sup> In March 1962, for instance, he was elected vice-president of the Congrès de la Communauté européenne des Écrivains [Congress of the European Community of Writers] (COMES).

## Europe and the Third World

Sartre's engagement with the non-European world is often represented as something that was a belated substitute for his disappointed faith in the Soviet Union.<sup>73</sup> Yet, Sartre's engagement with what would come to be termed the Third World both long preceded and endured beyond the Fanon preface. Again, the idea of Europe was a continual touchstone, although its characteristics or implications varied, and can be tracked closely to Sartre's developing thought. In fact, Sartre harboured a hostility to colonialism from a young age.<sup>74</sup> His

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<sup>70</sup> See *idem.*, *Europe's Intellectuals and the Cold War*, 142-143.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, Jean-Paul Sartre, "Le devoir d'un intellectuel est de dénoncer l'injustice partout," *Combat*, 31 Oct.-1 Nov. 1953.

<sup>73</sup> See especially Judt, *Past Imperfect*.

<sup>74</sup> Flynn, *Sartre*, 283-284.

elaborations of Europe in relation to the non-European world cannot be separated from his early project to “thicken” his conception of freedom to account for its concrete conditions, as well as his maxim that if the oppressed are not free, nor are their oppressors.

Sartre’s engagement with Europe again presents an advantageous view into French and transnational political and intellectual influences and exchanges, ranging from black intellectual networks to the Cuban Revolution and the emergence of the Third World, the Algerian War, as well as Italian Communist Europeanism. Furthermore, as we have seen, to the extent that Sartre’s engagement with ideas of Europe is noted, it tends to be in relation to the Fanon preface, whose representation of Europe cemented the image of Sartre as a purveyor of violence. Yet, it is precisely through an examination of Sartre’s representations of Europe and the Third World that we see that that stereotype requires significant qualifications.

As early as 1947 in the first edition of the flagship journal *Présence africaine* [*African Presence*], he wrote in “Présence noire” [“Black Presence”] about the inauthenticity entailed by the imposition of European language and culture on the colonial world – “this European chatter.”<sup>75</sup> He also introduced an idea which would recur in his discussions of Europe in relation to the non-European world – that Europe’s “old body” might draw life from non-European cultural and political effervescence.<sup>76</sup> Sartre added to this claim the idea of the colonial world as a mirror of Europe, echoing Hegel’s account of the Slave as the revealed reality of the Master.<sup>77</sup> His 1948 “Black Orpheus” was particularly important, as well as for its more general indictment of Europe’s self-definition through its colonialism. This influential polemic opened with the immediate, forceful claim that,

Formerly Europeans with divine right, we were already feeling our dignity beginning to crumble under American or Soviet looks; Europe was already no more than a geographical

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<sup>75</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Présence noire,” *Présence Africaine*, 1 (Nov.-Dec. 1947), 28-29, at 29.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> See Ronald E. Santoni, *Sartre on Violence. Curiously Ambivalent* (University Park, PA, 2003), 9.

accident, the peninsula that Asia shoves into the Atlantic. We were hoping to find a bit of our greatness reflected in the domesticated eyes of the Africans. But there are no more domesticated eyes: there are wild and free looks that judge our world.<sup>78</sup>

Reiterating the view that Europe should signify something more positive and substantial than a spatial delineation, Sartre here brilliantly represented the sense of disquiet induced in the revelation of one's image in the eyes of others. To do so, Sartre also foregrounded Antillean and African poetic representations of Europe.<sup>79</sup>

Paige Arthur also notes that “Black Orpheus” represented a clear shift in Sartre’s politics in this period, synthesising ideas on freedom, the concrete situation, and collective otherness.<sup>80</sup> That collective otherness was often to be set against Europe and Europeans. And the defining features of Europeans, as suggested here, derive from the articulation of a certain positionality within capitalism (which was in turn differentiated within Europe itself) and, as Arthur puts it, “a racially marked for-itself engaging within a struggle with another racially marked for-itself.” It is in this way that Sartre characterised Europe as embodying racial oppression and colonialism without conflating the two – a view that was conjoined to the maxim that no European was free while others were oppressed. Another vital point of “Black Orpheus” was to attack an imposed universality, which was a positing of a white “essence” by colonising Europeans.<sup>81</sup> Again, this provincialisation of Europe did not renege on the principle of universalism, as controversially expressed in this instance through Sartre’s depiction of

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<sup>78</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Black Orpheus,” trans. John MacCombie, *The Massachusetts Review*, 6/1 (1964 – 1965), 13-52, at 14.

<sup>79</sup> Sartre in *ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>80</sup> Paige Arthur, *Unfinished Projects: Decolonization and the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (London & New York, 2010), 30.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

Negritude movement's writings as an "anti-racist racism" that would put itself out of business in promoting a society beyond class and racial oppression.

If Sartre is most associated with discourse about Europe in relation to the Algerian war, it is notable that most of his interventions on the war mention European settlers and European capitalism and colonialism, but not explicitly Europe as such. As the anti-war movement radicalised, so did references to Europe increase. This was a rhetorical means of juxtaposing other disreputable aspects of European identity, above all fascism, in order to buttress the case against French prosecution of the war in its North African departments. Such was the case in a key moment in the anti-war movement – the 1960 Declaration of the 121. Among the claims to which Sartre signed his name was: "need we remind you that 15 years after the destruction of Hitler's regime, French militarism, in meeting the demands of this war, has re-established torture and made it once again a European institution."<sup>82</sup> Perhaps indicative of the tendency of guarded distinctiveness of ideas of Europe in different intellectual camps, there was seemingly no awareness, much less taking on board, of Camus's reference to a "Europe of torture" with regard to Eastern bloc tyrannies in 1957 on reception of his Nobel Prize.

Sartre's most famous invocation of Europe was, however, his 1961 preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, in which he claimed that the continent was "heading towards an abyss". Inevitably the intervention fuelled accusations of self-flagellating anti-Europeanism and an obsession with the decline of Europe. No doubt, critics have been right to point to the perils of interpreting anti-colonial violence simply as the unfolding of a historical dialectic of anti-colonial revolt which will efface the scars and trauma of colonial violence. Yet, the understandable distaste for the text overrode one of its most important assertions – that the violence of the colonised was itself, in an important sense, an image of Europe. It also detracted

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<sup>82</sup> "The Declaration in Support of Those Who Refuse to Fight in Algeria," *New Left Review*, I/6 (Nov.-Dec. 1960), 41, at 41.

from the fact that the preface was a skilful rhetorical performance that constitutes Europe as peripheral, and invites Europeans to understand their continent through the prism of the very peripheral state that it imposed on its colonies, including the psychic and corporeal violence this entailed.<sup>83</sup> This can be understood as a simultaneous provincialisation of Europe and endorsement of universalism. That dual commitment was taken up by the journal, *Partisans*, for whom the preface was a guiding text. This Third-Worldist publication furthered intellectual dialogue and exchange over the question of Europe, both between European and non-European thinkers and militants.<sup>84</sup>

Amid the voluminous literature on the preface, two contemporary critiques are particularly useful in elucidating under-considered convergences and divergences in Sartre's representation of Europe in comparison with the broader intellectual field, as well as how Sartre's Europe connected to the conjuncture of a key shift in his thought. First, Denis de Rougemont – also a regular contributor to *Preuves* – rejected Sartre's "masochism", complaining that, "Sartre moves in an intellectual village and projects on to 'Europe' provincial hostilities. When he writes Europe he only thinks of France, and when he thinks of France he only sees the Algerian drama."<sup>85</sup> He insisted that motivations for European colonialism were more variegated, contradictory and often positive, so that Sartre's endorsement of Fanon's indictment of Europe was invalid. Dismissing Sartre's contention that Europe was done for, de Rougemont insisted that, "the facts show us that the nations of Europe, only just freed of their colonies, have started to discover *Europe* and the necessity for its union; that its nascent unity – the Common Market is only two years old – has almost immediately resulted into stupefying

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<sup>83</sup> See Judith Butler, "Violence, Nonviolence. Sartre on Fanon," in Jonathan Judaken, ed., *Race after Sartre: Antiracism, Africana Existentialism, Postcolonialism* (Albany, 2008), 211-231.

<sup>84</sup> Christoph Kalter, *The Discovery of the Third World: Decolonization and the Rise of the New Left in France, c. 1950-1976*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Cambridge, 2016), 227-228.

<sup>85</sup> De Rougemont, "Sartre contre l'Europe," 4.

prosperity. Europe is not ‘finished’ – much to the displeasure of these furious types – but has hardly just begun and is growing impressively [*puissamment*].”<sup>86</sup>

Domenach, editor of the progressive Catholic journal *Esprit* [*Spirit*], in turn attacked de Rougemont’s critique, sardonically dismissing the implication that spiritual disaster in Algeria and “Europe’s scandal” were of little import whilst the continent’s economic forecast was so sunny.<sup>87</sup> He concurred with de Rougemont, nonetheless, in that Sartre’s preface was much more about Algeria than it was really about Europe, and questioned the viability of drawing universal lessons from the Algerian case.<sup>88</sup> He recognised the colonial guilt that Sartre pointed to, but did not accept what he saw as his binary conception of responsibility and complicity – “such a procedure has a productive simplicity to it: the grey zone [*la grisaille*] of most human actions gives way to an exhilarating [*exaltant*] light.” Sartre’s understanding of the relation between Europe and responsibility neglected the fact that “there exists in human conflicts zones of transition, knots of complicity [*noeuds de connivence*].”<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, Domenach allowed Sartre’s point that Algerian violence was “our” violence turned back against us. But for all that, he would not accept that this required acquiescence. “I accept my part of Europe’s shame. But I will never resign myself to being reduced to the rank of an object. I continue to fight for my hope.”<sup>90</sup>

Instructively, Domenach raised the question of the timing of Sartre’s piece: “Why this exaltation of the penitent who grabs hold of sticks to flog himself all the harder? The debasement of Europe is hardly the discovery of the season. Such things have happened for thirty years: fascism, racism, the concentration camps...”<sup>91</sup> There was a certain convergence

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>87</sup> Jean-Marie Domenach, “Les damnés de la terre,” *Esprit* (March 1962), 454-463, at 457.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 454, 458-9.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 458-459.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 462-463.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 455.

here in the two men's determination to conceptualise Europe without flinching from its multifarious constitutive layers of violence. In one sense, though, Domenach was the answer to his own question. Emma Kuby situates the preface in the context of strategic disputes internal to the anti-war movement, particularly since Domenach and the journal *Esprit* – a core rival to *Les Temps modernes* on the intellectual left – placed faith in testimony, bearing witness and non-violence as the basis of their campaign against the war. Sartre's interventions, especially in the period around 1958 with the demise of the Fourth Republic and ascension of the Fifth and De Gaulle, were actually much more typical of the mainstream anti-war movement in their concern and call for the defence of French democracy.<sup>92</sup> But the absence of both mobilisation of the French left – conspicuously under the hegemony of the SFIO and PCF – and the absence of democratic mobilisation in May 1958 when the government effectively ceded to the demands of seemingly fascist military putschists in Algeria, contributed to Sartre's impression of a generalised blindness to complicity and disavowal of responsibility. Such was the basis for his embracing of violence, and the violent prescription for Europe in the preface.<sup>93</sup>

In their respective critiques of the Fanon preface, both de Rougemont and Domenach touched on an overlooked aspect of Sartre's depiction of Europe – this prosperous Europe's flipside: scarcity. This connected to Sartre's advice to Europeans to read Fanon's book precisely in order to know Europe and work to refashion it accordingly. The template Sartre had in mind for this Europeanisation lay in his wish to de-centre Europe, radically overhaul its defining vision of its humanism that at once produced European humans and non-European sub-humans, and in accordance with the universalism that he hints at in the preface whereby

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<sup>92</sup> Emma Kathryn Kuby, "Between Humanism and Terror: The Problem of Political Violence in Postwar France, 1944-1962" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 2011), 393-396.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 388-389.

human kind “will not define itself as the sum total of the world’s inhabitants, but as the infinite unity of their mutual needs.”<sup>94</sup>

Need, and its theoretical elaboration, scarcity, were central to Sartre’s philosophical research agenda culminating in his 1960 *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. This vital component of Sartre’s idea of Europe in the Fanon preface can be understood as the crystallisation of the thought that Sartre was working through in that tome. Importantly, it was given practical confirmation by his experiences in Cuba in 1960, where he in fact read Fanon’s work.

Sartre’s account of the driving force of conflict had come a long way from his account of duelling looks in *Being and Nothingness*. Now in the *Critique* it was scarcity that drove conflict and violence. Existence is defined by scarcity, by the fact that “there is not enough for everybody”, so that each individual’s existence is a threat for another and for everyone.<sup>95</sup> Permeating human relations with a fundamental antagonism, scarcity is dehumanizing. But there are distinct aspects of this scarcity which correspond to Sartre’s concepts of the practico-inert and praxis, as formulated in the *Critique*. The practico-inert refers to the historical sedimentation of human projects and meanings in our material world. Praxis refers to our projects in freedom to transcend the practico-inert. In short, this is a materialist reformulation of Sartre’s core concern with the given and taken, facticity and freedom, which accords much greater weight. Europe is clearly a target in this sense when Sartre laments that, “the fact is after thousands of years of History, three quarters of the world’s population is

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<sup>94</sup> Cited in Butler, “Violence, Nonviolence,” 224. Note here that Butler is using the 1963 translation of the preface, which differs slightly from the most recent translation, which renders the final line as “as the infinite unity of their reciprocal relations.”

<sup>95</sup> See Michael J. Monahan, “Sartre’s ‘Critique of Dialectical Reason’ and the Inevitability of Violence: Human Freedom in the Milieu of Scarcity,” *Sartre Studies International*, 14/2 (2008), 48-70, at 49.



undernourished.”<sup>96</sup> Indeed, it is instructive that most of the references to Europe in the *Critique* are located in the section dealing with this global condition of scarcity.<sup>97</sup>

But if scarcity is our condition, it does not determine the meanings we invest in it or our projects that depart from it. Sartre highlighted the dubious naturalisation of scarcity in his series of reports on the young Cuban revolution in *France-Soir* [*France-Evening*] between June-July 1960: “Cuba, we say in Europe, is an under-developed country. I admire the modesty of this neologism. Under-developed – nobody is at fault. Maybe it’s the climate. Or the resources of the soil. Who knows? The indolence of the inhabitants. In any case, it’s nature [...] Above all else let’s not look for the responsibility among men.”<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, in the same series of reports, Sartre recounted an episode with Fidel Castro that confirmed for him his elaboration of scarcity as exceeding need. This suggested the a priori unlimitable requirements for humanisation of relations between Europe and the non-European world. Castro declared, “‘The need of a man is his fundamental right above all other rights.’ ‘And if you were asked for the moon?’, I said to his response. He drew on his cigar, noted that it had gone out and turned to me. ‘If I was asked for the moon, then that would be what one needed,’ he replied to me.’ To which Sartre concluded: “I have few friends – I attach great importance to friendship. After this reply, I felt that he had become one of them.”<sup>99</sup>

One prominent debate around Sartre’s work relates to the question of the ambivalence of his positions on violence. Unsurprisingly, the Fanon preface figures centrally. But if Sartre has been typecast with regard to violence via his representation of Europe and the Third World,

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<sup>96</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason. Volume 1. Theory of Practical Ensembles*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London & New York, 2004), 123.

<sup>97</sup> “Matter as Totalised Totality: A First Encounter with Necessity,” in *ibid.*, 122-252.

<sup>98</sup> *Idem.*, “Ouragan sur le sucre,” *Les Temps modernes*, 649 (2008), 5-155, at 37-38. My translation.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 143. My translation.

it is precisely by paying attention to his broader representations of Europe and the Third World that the need to qualify such images becomes apparent.

The debate has missed a curious moment around 1964-1965. The “Preface” was republished in *Situations V* in 1964, the same year as Sartre worked on his adaptation of Euripides’ play *Trojan Women*, published the following year and premiering in March at the Théâtre national populaire. Here, in his commentary and adjustments to the actual text, he returned to Europe, the Third World and violence, but in a strikingly different register:

The only place where I have actually interpolated anything new into the text was in reference to the Colonial War where I allowed myself to use the word Europe which is, of course, a wholly modern term [sic]. I did so because it is the equivalent of the ancient antagonism which existed between the Greeks and the barbarians, that is, between Greece and the civilization around the Mediterranean, and the gradual infiltration into Asia Minor where Colonial Imperialism arose. It was this colonialism of Greece into Asia Minor that Euripides denounced, and where I use the expression “dirty war” in reference to these expeditions I was, in fact, taking no liberties with the original text.<sup>100</sup>

Echoing his view in the Fanon preface, he inserted into the text the following reformulation: “The Greeks have liberated us... They told us they were bringing Greek culture and European enlightenment to the backward people of Asia; Our city burned with progress, Our young men had their limbs amputated by philosophy.”<sup>101</sup> Sartre recalled that his attention had been drawn to the play when it was produced during the Algerian War, and that he had been impressed by its reception. Curiously, though, this image of Europe derived from Sartre’s preoccupation precisely with violence. As he put it,

I admit it was the subject of this play which first interested me. This is not surprising. The play had a precise political significance when it was first produced. It was an explicit condemnation

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<sup>100</sup> Euripides, *The Trojan Women*, adapted by Jean-Paul Sartre, trans. Ronald Duncan (London, 1967), 9-10. It is ironic that Sartre mistakes Europe for a wholly modern term in adaptation of Greek play, since the term was, as Eric Hobsbawm notes, first used by the Greeks. See Eric Hobsbawm, “On the Curious History of Europe,” in Hobsbawm, *On History* (London, 1997), 217-227.

<sup>101</sup> Euripides, *The Trojan Women*, 54.

of war in general, and of imperial expeditions in particular. We know today that war would trigger off an atomic war in which there would be no victor nor vanquished. This play demonstrates this fact precisely: that war is a defeat to humanity.<sup>102</sup>

How to explain this advance on the Fanon preface in terms of his representation of Europe, the Third World and violence?

Sartre wrote the play while staying in Rome in July and August 1964, fresh in the wake of his important “Rome Lecture” address to the PCI’s Gramsci Institute in May. And the same notion of “humanity” emphasised in the Lecture figured prominently in Sartre’s commentary on *Trojan Women*. It is in this context that Sartre laid out here, probably most extensively, guiding limitations on violence. Colonial and anticolonial violence alike were incommensurable with those of nuclear war, or even the threat of it. It was, after all, the ultimate foreclosure of an integral humanity of genuine reciprocity, an authentic universalism.<sup>103</sup> As Santoni interprets the lecture, “humanity, or being human, is not inevitable but only possible. Yet human autonomy, or humanity, remains the only possible end of praxis – an end ‘not knowable but graspable as a sense of direction’ by the ‘uncompleted, alienated’ humanity that we are.”<sup>104</sup> But humanity as a “capacity for autonomous self-production” has no models: it requires “invention”. This reinforces the point that for Sartre it was precisely as a project that Europe was valuable and uninteresting conceived as a destiny. Speculatively, this representation of Europe reflected the near completion of European decolonisation, and the recalibrated scale of violence brought home in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>103</sup> One can trace this conviction back to at least his 1954 piece “La bombe H, une arme contre l’Histoire,” *Défense de la Paix* (July 1954), 18-22. Recall also his September 1958 lament that “since Hiroshima, we have been threatened, angered and worried the whole time. I imagine that in every mind there is a scar which is nothing less than terror at rest. Many people today could repeat Hobbes’s words of three centuries ago: ‘The one and only passion of my life has been fear.’” See Jean-Paul Sartre, “The Frogs Who Demand a King,” in *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, 109-134, at 127.

<sup>104</sup> Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*, 143.

<sup>105</sup> Note, though, philosopher Stephen Priest’s claim that “During the Cuban missile crisis of 1963 [sic] Sartre pleaded with the Soviet government not to give in to American pressure to withdraw their weapons from Cuban

Another important aspect is the Italian context, and Sartre's engagement with Italian Communists on ideas of Europe and the broader project of universalism. At this particular moment, it was the Italian Communist Party (PCI) that Sartre found to complement and shape most strongly his approach to thinking about humanity. And it is striking that Europe, understood as a project, was an important aspect of the party's outlook. Conjoining this change of interlocutor with continuity, it was no doubt to the PCI's credit that Sartre saw its political culture as visibly rooted in the wartime struggle against Fascism, and can only have recalled his own formative political commitments.<sup>106</sup>

Sartre's adaptation of *Trojan Women* in the summer of 1964 overlapped with the death of Palmiro Togliatti, the long-time leader of the PCI. Sartre's ebullient obituary is a further indication of the kinds of motivations he had at this time. Instructively, he referred positively, as we have seen, not only to Togliatti's endorsement of the European Common Market but also his idea of "polycentrism", which was integral to the Italian party's conception of Europe.<sup>107</sup> Polycentrism developed hesitatingly, and gave rise to sharp critiques from the outset – not least from long-term opponents of Sartre like Roger Garaudy and the PCF in general.<sup>108</sup> As Togliatti saw the principle, the rigid separation of the world into two blocs, and decolonisation and the rise of the Third World required a rethinking of Europe. The onset of the Sino-Soviet split certainly inflected the concept of polycentrism's development, but also reiterated its pertinence. It implied the need to transcend the division of the world into opposing armed blocs and to solve through negotiations those problems which are not yet solved, to press for disarmament, the prohibition of nuclear weapons and a proper consolidation of *détente* and peace – all theses

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soil." Stephen Priest, ed., *Jean-Paul Sartre: Basic Writings* (London, 2000), 9. However, the claim is not referenced, and I have been unable to find any reference to it in the contemporary press.

<sup>106</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Palmiro Togliatti," in Sartre, *Situations IX: Mélanges* (Paris, 1972), 137-151, at 143.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 145, 144.

<sup>108</sup> Donald Sassoon, *The Strategy of the Italian Communist Party: From the Resistance to the Historic Compromise* (London, 1981), 112.

that echoed in Sartre's representation of and reflection on Europe in *Trojan Women*.<sup>109</sup>

Sartre's endorsement of Togliatti on the European Common Market and Europe did not imply any reconciliation with the likes of de Rougemont, however. Nor did it even imply any sustained interest in actually existing intergovernmental European political integration. But it did indicate a commitment to Europe beyond the completion of European decolonisation, seeing it as a valuable project in a reconfigured world, where imperialism was now seen to be embodied by the USA. This manifested itself in Sartre's retention of the concept of the European intellectual. He had already set out a powerful critique of the European intellectual's tendency to exoticise the non-European world in his 1954 preface to photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson's account of the Chinese Revolution. Here he praised Cartier-Bresson's work for breaking with the European tradition of fetishising the supposed irreducible differences of its Other, or even producing those differences.<sup>110</sup> It was to Cartier-Bresson's credit that he transcended these artificial and nefarious dichotomies to recognise a universal human condition: "the picturesque is wiped away, farewell *European* poetry."<sup>111</sup> Conceiving a more positive role now for the European intellectual, and as part of his opposition to the United States' war in Vietnam, Sartre proposed in March 1965 that Italy take the initiative in an action of all European intellectuals against the war.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, in an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* [*New Observer*] in April, Sartre explained his decision not to go to the United States in the context of his role as "a European intellectual in solidarity with the Third World."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>110</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "From One China to Another," in Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, 23-24.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 25. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>112</sup> "Sartre non va in U.S.A.," *L'Unità*, 19 March 1965, cited in Contat & Rybalka, *Les écrits de Sartre*, 412.

<sup>113</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Il n'y a plus de dialogue possible," in Sartre, *Situations VIII. Autour de 68* (Paris, 1971), 9-19, at 12.

## Conclusion

In October 1945 the “Introduction” to the inaugural issue of *Les Temps modernes* announced: “we proclaim that man is an absolute. But he is such in his time, in his surroundings, on his parcel of earth [*sur sa terre*].”<sup>114</sup> From the time of the Second World War, Sartre – one of the journal’s directors – often took Europe to be the most relevant spatial point of reference in exploring and propounding this maxim. Significantly, an examination of his discourse on Europe elucidates important nuances in his positions that have given rise to scholarly controversy surrounding his political and intellectual trajectory. This includes the nature of his activity during World War II, his relationship to Communism and the Soviet Union, and, strikingly, his attitudes about violence.

What is more, Sartre’s engagement with the idea of Europe discloses important insights into the development of his thought. Conversely, an examination of this discourse reveals a fuller view of the nature and range of debates on the question of Europe to which he contributed. These revolved around the constitutive elements of Europe and their relation to each other; reckoning with violence and its legacies; how best to calibrate the relationship between the national and international, the particular and the universal, and how Europe and Europeans should calibrate these relations.

Sartre’s interest in Europe was not primarily manifested in engagement with post-war interstate European integration. His focus was on a more abstract sense of what Europe meant beyond a geographical label, and, correlatively, what it meant to be European. His evolving idea of Europe was a close index of the mediation of his commitments pertaining to current events on the one hand, and on the other his philosophical inquiries into freedom and its conditions and curtailments. The first revolved around his personal experience of and reactions

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<sup>114</sup> Idem., “Présentation,” *Les Temps modernes* (October, 1945), 1-21, at 7.

to the vicissitudes of politics – from fascist intellectuals and reckoning with the destructiveness of Nazi Europe, to nonaligned socialist Europeanism, fellow-travelling with and subsequent distancing from the PCF, the rise of the Third World from Cuba to Algeria, and nuclear proliferation.

If Sartre's philosophical take on inter-personal relations in his 1943 *Being and Nothingness* is depressingly conflictual, he changed course via the formative experience of oppression and curtailment of freedom in the Second World War. Crucially, this included the conviction of the mutual unfreedom linking oppressor and oppressed, but also that subjugation was never a closed situation and could be transcended. Sartre hijacked the concept of Europe from its fascist advocates whom he attacked, and reformulated it as an expression and basis of socialism and liberty – two values that remained core to his thought for the rest of his life, but whose precise articulation went through various adaptations and reformulations.

As part of that project, his research agenda increasingly interrogated the social, and the underlying relationship between facticity and freedom. His ideas of Europe were an expression of his evolving attempt to grapple with this relationship according to shifting contexts and priorities. In this sense, Sartre's adumbration of a knotted Europe is useful in two ways. It exemplifies and illuminates his continual attempt to conceptualise Europe by trying to think through the full gamut of experiences which inflected its situation and, in turn, that of Europeans. At the same time, the image of intertwined experiences constituting Europe, which can be intuited but whose exact connections remain obscure and ambiguous, accords with Sartre's renewal of his philosophical system after 1956. Increasingly, Sartre aligned his ideas of Europe with an account of facticity that comprised sedimented past praxes, as well as the grey zone of obscurity and ambiguity that are central to human experience. This, however, implied no concessions whatsoever in his insistence on responsibility. A constant of his ideas of Europe was that individual Europeans, from European colonialist to intellectual to worker,

shared responsibility for the world around them.

This imperative connected to Sartre's insistence that Europe was a project, not an identity. Destiny was invoked in the sense of the wish that Europe act, rather than be acted upon, in world affairs. Europe was not simply a negative project, as indicated not least in Sartre's promotion of the flourishing of European culture. But European destiny as hard identity or historical guarantee was resolutely rejected. Like all labels of collective belonging, there was always a risk of "Europe" ossifying as an identity, entailing bad faith and alibis in the disavowal of freedom of Europeans. It was as a concept to understand the world and to advance human emancipation that Europe was of interest to Sartre.

Finally, Sartre was especially productive in taking the lead in thinking through ideas of Europe that involved both its provincialisation and an ongoing commitment to universalism. Humanity with respect for particularity was a constant point of reference. A genuine commitment to this vision had to reckon with the tendency for its invocation to mask a constitutively complicit relationship between a super- and sub-humanity. If it remained the case at the end of Sartre's life that humanity as a collective "we-subject" was still an unattainable goal, it was incumbent on Europeans to conceptualise, and continually reconceptualise, Europe in view of that horizon.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Martin Jay, "From Totality to Totalization: The Existentialist Marxism of Jean-Paul Sartre," in *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley, 1984), 353.